REMARKS

I. Overview

These remarks are set forth in response to the Office Action mailed April 19, 2007. As this amendment has been timely filed within the three-month, shortened statutory period, neither a petition for an extension of time, nor a petition fee is required. Presently, claims 1 through 17 are pending in the Patent Application. Claims 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 14 and 15 are independent in nature. In the Office Action, the Examiner has set forth rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 112 and 103(a). Specifically, claim 3 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph for indefiniteness, whereas claims 1 through 3, 7 through 9 and 13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0264376 by Schrodi in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0110280 by Hinchliffe et al. (Hinchliffe). By comparison, claims 4, 5, 10, 11 and 14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication, 2004/0215722 by Mukherjee. Finally, claims 6, 12 and 15 through 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mukherjee in view of Hinchliffe.

II. Summary of Response

In response, the Applicants have amended claim 3 to correct a typographical error leading to the rejection set forth by the Examiner. Otherwise, the Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections on the art in as much as the Applicants believe that neither Schrodi, Mukherjee nor Hinchliffe show the prioritization of a group of participants to an e-meeting--an express requirement enunciated in many of the independent claims. Likewise, neither Schrodi,

Mukherjee nor Hinchliffe show the randomized grouping of participants to an e-meeting--another express requirement enunciated in the remaining independent claims.

III. Detailed Response

A. The Applicants' Invention

The Applicants have invented a method, system and apparatus for policy driven, online meeting updates during the course of an electronic meeting. The invention defines one or more groups of participants in an electronic meeting, and assigns a unique relative priority to each group of participants. Meeting events, such as slide changes or other data that is sent to the various participants for viewing, are transmitted to the various groups in a sequence ordered by the relative priorities assigned to the groups. Alternatively, the invention provides for randomly staggering the delivery of data to the various groups. Both embodiments alleviate the scalability problems that arise for electronic meetings having large numbers of participants.

B. Characterization of the Art

1. Schrodi

Schrodi relates to a method and system configured for restricting traffic in a packet-oriented, connectionless network for an efficient QoS transmission of prioritized data packets. According to the invention, reliability checks are carried out that include a reliability check with respect to the network input and the network output. The reliability checks allow one to check whether resources meeting the requirements for transmission of a group of data packets of a priority class are available in the network. Only in the case of data packet groups for which all the reliability checks are positive, transmission with the priority class of the data packets is

allowed. On the other hand, for groups of data packets for which one of the reliability checks is negative, a different procedure is carried out. In this way, resource shortages can be avoided at both network inputs and network outputs, thereby safeguarding QoS transmission.

2. Mukherjee

Mukherjee relates to the communication of data between a users or participants, specifically providing configurable collaboration infrastructures of increased flexibility that minimize the utilization of different infrastructures for different or new collaborative applications. The communications rules of Mukherjee can be modified to accommodate a wide range of configurations and applications and enforcement of communications rules at the infrastructure, such as a server, as opposed to individual participant machines, provides collaboration sessions of increased security, streamlining of collaborative work in progress, and automatic archival of content.

3. Hinchliffe

Hinchliffe provides a computer program product for controlling a source computer to update out-of-date data stored by destination computers with updated data stored by the source computer using a computer network connecting the source computer to the destination computers. The computer program product performs several steps in order which include first associating priority data specifying a priority level with each destination computer and establishing groups of destination computers according to priority level such that destination computers within a group of destination computers share a common priority level. Push update

tasks are generated by the source computer, each task serving to transfer the updated data from the source computer to a corresponding group of destination computers via the computer network. The tasks are ordered based upon the common priority level of each group of destination computers to which a task relates to form a sequence of push update tasks. Finally, the sequence of tasks are sequentially executed to transfer the updated data from the source computer to the destination computers via the computer network.

C. Discussion

The Applicants observe that while Schodi relates to the prioritization of data packets in a data communications system at a very low level, Schodi does mention that high level services that can be provided in the data communications network include Web conferencing. The Applicants respectfully note, however, that Schodi wholly lacks any teaching to the prioritization of groups of participants to a Web conference--only the prioritization of data packets which may or may not be part of a Web conference. Hinchliffe fails to cure this deficiency. The Examiner recites paragraph [0014] of Hinchliffe for the proposition that Hinchliffe teaches the assignment of a relative priority to a group of participants to an e-meeting. For the convenience of the Examiner, a complete reproduction of paragraph [0014] follows:

> [0014] The invention recognises that when a source computer wishes to push a **data update** out to a plurality of destination computers, then the effectiveness and efficiency of the overall operation can be improved by breaking the **destination computers down into groups,** each with an associated priority, and then sending the updated data to the respective groups in accordance with their priority level. Breaking the job down into groups of computers reduces the peak network traffic in a way that can assist in avoiding malfunctions and excessively slow operation. Prioritising the different groups enables the computers which are most critical and have the highest need for the updated data to be associated with high priority groups and so receive that data first. This is particularly important for the push-type of update task that is being performed. Such push-type update tasks are often used as an emergency measure when it is desired to force an update to occur quickly and without having to wait for pull-type transfer technologies to operate whereby a destination computer will poll to see if there is an update available for it and download such an

> update if one is available. Given that this technique relates to push-type updates for which the destinations are known, the technique avoids merely trying to issue the update simultaneously to all destinations but instead recognises that greater overall efficiency and effectiveness may be achieved by grouping the destination computers and prioritising those groups according to a predetermined priority level.

Thus, from the bolded portions of the passage, it will be understood that destination computers intended to receive a data update are grouped by priority and not participants to an e-meeting. Moreover, there is no mention in paragraph [0014] that the priority assigned to the destination computers are relative in nature as required by the Applicants' claim language.

Likewise, Mukherjee does not include a teaching to the randomized grouping of participants to an e-meeting. The Examiner relies upon paragraph [0007] of Mukherjee in support of a contrary proposition. Again, for the convenience of the Examiner, the entirety of paragraph [0007] is reproduced as follows:

> [0007] According to one embodiment, a collaboration session communications method comprises coupling a plurality of groups of participants with a collaboration infrastructure and providing a plurality of communications rules to the collaboration infrastructure to control communications of data within a collaboration session. The method also includes outputting a communication from a first one of the groups for communication to a second one of the groups, and receiving the communication within the collaboration infrastructure after the providing. The method provides identifying the communication as originating from the first one of the groups and intended for communication to the second one of the groups, and forwarding the communication to a third one of the groups using the collaboration infrastructure and responsive to the identifying and in accordance with one of the communications rules.

As it will be apparent to the Examiner neither the term "random" or any analogous term or phrase can be found in paragraph [0007]. Surely, "coupling a plurality of groups of participants with a collaboration infrastructure" cannot be said to teach "random".

Of import, a broad statement of the invention can be found in Applicants' claim 15 in which it is stated, "inducing individual e-meeting updates at different times for different selections of e-meeting participants." The term "inducing" has the dictionary meaning ascribed by Merriam-Webster of "to move by persuasion or influence or to call forth or bring about by

influence or stimulation." This claim term has not been addressed as it is found in claim 15 and further, neither Schodi, Mukherjee nor Hinchliffe teach or suggest alone or in combination with one another the concept of *inducing the transmission of meeting invitations to different groups of e-meeting participants at different times according to different relative priorities assigned to the different groups.*

IV. Conclusion

The Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 112 and 103(a) owing to the amended claims and these remarks. This entire application is now believed to be in condition for allowance. Consequently, such action is respectfully requested. The Applicant requests that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Amendment, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

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